



## **THE USE OF RECIPROCAL TEACHING TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING VOCABULARY TO ELEMENTARY STUDENTS**

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### **Abstract**

Nowadays many problems are found in learning English for elementary school students which cause them cannot comprehend the vocabulary they have learned, for instance the lack of the vocabulary the students have or the theme of the vocabulary is not interesting for the students. Moreover, some teachers do not design an interesting vocabulary learning that makes elementary school students actively participate during the learning. Thus, to solve the problem, the writer suggests Reciprocal Teaching Technique as a helpful technique that can support elementary school students to comprehend the vocabulary they learn. Reciprocal Teaching Technique is designed to create fun vocabulary learning for elementary school students by using puppets. This technique has four strategies which are predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Advantages of Reciprocal Teaching Technique are: 1) Motivating the students to learn the vocabulary, 2) Helping students to comprehend the vocabulary better, 3) Increasing the number of vocabulary the students understand, 4) The students can actively participating during the learning activity, 5) The students become confidently expressing their ideas, 6) Granting the students a good skill in learning the vocabulary.

**Key words:** Vocabulary, Reciprocal Teaching

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Puskas (2016) states that when teaching foreign language vocabulary to young learners, the teacher needs to maintain in thought that young learners are still constructing on their first language vocabulary and are still in the process of obtaining and arranging concepts. The first language background needs to be taken into consideration so that the teacher knows what will work and what may be too difficult for young learners. Puskas also says that teaching vocabulary is a continuous activity. Words have to be continuously reviewed, refreshed and practiced again and again. This is similar with what Cameron (2001) puts that learning vocabulary is a cyclical process of encountering new words and initial learning, followed by encountering those words again and again, each time expanding knowledge of what the words imply and how they are applied in the

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foreign language. In addition, Jufri (2016) states that the teachers need to pay attention to how they teach the students in the classroom and let the students practice more in learning.

Meanwhile, Brewster, Ellis and Girard (2002) explain that children experience five main phases in their attempts to learn new vocabulary and attach the vocabulary they already know, which are understanding and learning the meaning of new words, attending to form, vocabulary practicing, memorizing, and checking activities, consolidating, recycling, extending, organizing, recording, and personalizing vocabulary, and developing strategies for vocabulary learning.

English for elementary school students is their first foreign language. They learn the foreign language for the first time, so they only learn simple language feature including vocabulary. Vocabulary is a simple but central feature to language and seriously important to elementary school students. Without adequate vocabulary, the students cannot effectively communicate nor express their ideas both in oral and written form. The students also are obstructed from learning the foreign language because their vocabulary is limited. Moreover, the elementary school students do not know how to enrich and comprehend their vocabulary. If this continues, the students probably will gradually lose interest in learning the new language.

To prevent this problem, a certain technique in teaching vocabulary is needed. The technique must be able to help the elementary school students in learning and comprehending the vocabulary. It is also expected to be suitable with the nature of the students which still like to play to each other, so that they can have more interest in learning the foreign language.

Therefore, there is Reciprocal Teaching Technique which is a helpful teaching technique for learning vocabulary. Reciprocal Teaching Technique is designed to focus on just four important strategies that the elementary school students can use to comprehend the vocabulary. The strategies are predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Elementary school students will learn their new vocabulary of foreign language through these strategies step by step with the support of puppets. Each puppet represents each strategy.

Reciprocal Teaching is created by Palincsar and Brown (1984). According to them, it is a technique where teacher and students take turns in talking about vocabulary they learn. Teacher and students take turns to predict, question, clarify, and summarize the vocabulary. In the first place, the teacher models the key activities of Reciprocal Teaching which are predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing. Thus, the teacher demonstrates suitable activities while the students are encouraged to participate at whatever level they can. The teacher may then give guidance and feedback at the appropriate level for each student.

Pressley (2002) states Reciprocal Teaching is assumed as an excellent technique to improve students' comprehension. Strategies used in Reciprocal Teaching are predicting what the students may find in learning vocabulary, questioning comprehension issues, clarifying to create deeper understanding, and summarizing what have been learned. According to Stahl (2004), these strategies enable students to self-monitor the learning through cooperative interaction.

There are four strategies to apply Reciprocal Teaching Technique during teaching vocabulary:

1. *Predicting*. Young learners preview the vocabulary to anticipate what might be important things of the vocabulary. This can be done before or during learning vocabulary. This strategy helps young learners learn to set their purpose of learning the vocabulary and monitor their vocabulary comprehension. The puppet used for predicting is named *Madam, the Powerful Predictor*. Language of predicting is as follows:
  - I think...
  - I wonder if...
  - I suppose...
  - I predict...
2. *Questioning*. Young learners ask questions throughout the learning process. They learn to generate questions about the vocabulary's theme, meaning, and important details. Questions here are the type to ask for information. Young learners stop at some words and question many things about those with the teacher assists. The puppet used for questioning is named *Quincy, the Quizzical Questioner*. Language of questioning is as follows:
  - What...?
  - Where...?
  - How...?
3. *Clarifying*. It helps young learners monitor their own vocabulary comprehension as they identify the problems they have while comprehending the words. Young learners and teacher share "fix-up" strategies to construct meaning. To clarify a word, young learners reread the words they do not understand yet, look for clues, try to blend the sounds together, think about what they know, think of another word that looks like this word, and try another word that makes sense. The puppet used for clarifying is named *Clara, the Careful Clarifier*. Language of clarifying is as follows:
  - I do not understand the word where...
  - This word is not clear.
  - I cannot figure out...
  - This word is tricky because...
4. *Summarizing*. To summarize effectively, young learners recall and arrange in order the vocabulary they have learned. Young learners can retell the meaning of the vocabulary with their own words. The puppet used for summarizing is named *Sammy, the Super Summarizer*. The language of summarizing is as follows:
  - The vocabulary is...
  - This word means...
  - The theme of the vocabulary is...
  - First...
  - Next...
  - Then...

- Finally...

## B. DISCUSSION

### 1. Preparation of Reciprocal Teaching Technique in Teaching Vocabulary to Elementary School Students

In preparing Reciprocal Teaching Technique, it should be noted that this technique is going to be applied in teaching vocabulary to elementary school students. The students are the ones in the fourth to sixth grade. They learn their first foreign language which is English. The vocabulary learning can be done approximately in a 35-minute lesson. According to Syahrudin (2013) to have a better activity, teacher must have a good preparation.

Material which needs to be prepared in Reciprocal Teaching Technique is vocabulary. The sets of words are preferably:

1. In familiar context for elementary school students such as:
  - a. Family: father, mother, brother, sister, etc.
  - b. Fruit: apple, mango, melon, banana, etc.
  - c. Animal: chicken, cat, bird, cow, etc.
  - d. Place: hospital, school, market, etc.
2. Presented in a group of words with certain similarities, for example, the words are in:
  - a. Color sets like green: frog, pea, leaf, etc.
  - b. Rhyming sets: bat, rat, hat, etc.
  - c. Lexical sets: shops, clothes, house, etc.
  - d. Grammatical sets: adjectives, nouns, verbs, etc.
  - e. Opposites or male and female: hot/cold, tall/short, boy/girl, etc.

Media that has to be prepared in Reciprocal Teaching Technique is four puppets. These puppets symbolize the four strategies which are predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing in Reciprocal Teaching Technique. The puppets are expected to support the elementary school students express their thought and comprehension more confidently. The puppets are in the following:

1. The first puppet represents the predicting strategy. It is called *Madam, the Powerful Predictor*. It helps the elementary school students predict the vocabulary. When Madam is used, the students preview the theme of the vocabulary to anticipate what words are going to appear in the vocabulary learning. The students are free to imagine, think, and then utter their own thought. Madam also assists the students in setting the purpose of learning the vocabulary.
2. The second puppet represents the questioning strategy. It is called *Quincy, the Quizzical Questioner*. It motivates the elementary school students to ask and answer questions throughout the learning process. They learn to generate questions about the meaning of the vocabulary and other important details. Every time the students finish reading few words of the vocabulary, it is the Quincy's time.
3. The third puppet represents the clarifying strategy. It is called *Clara, the Careful Clarifier*. Clara is used to monitor the comprehension of the

elementary school students toward the vocabulary. They identify the problems and misunderstandings they find while comprehending the vocabulary and solve them together during the learning. The students are also expected to construct meaning of the vocabulary by using fix-up strategies, which include looking up the words they do not understand yet, rereading the words, saying the words out loud, using context clues, asking questions, thinking about what they have already know, making connection with their background knowledge, thinking about the learning purpose, and paying attention to their thoughts as they learn the vocabulary.

4. The fourth puppet represents the summarizing strategy. It is called *Sammy, the Super Summarizer*. It supports the elementary school students summarize the vocabulary learning effectively. They also recall what vocabulary has been learned. They retell the words of the vocabulary as well as the meaning and the theme by using their own words.

If the puppets are not affordable to be used in the vocabulary learning, picture sticks, dolls and other media can be utilized.

## **2. Procedure of Reciprocal Teaching Technique in Teaching Vocabulary to Elementary School Students**

Here are the steps to teach vocabulary by using Reciprocal Teaching Technique:

1. *Activating the students' background knowledge.*

In the first step, the teacher activates the elementary school students' background knowledge about the vocabulary that will be learned. For example, the vocabulary is about family. So, the teacher activates the students' background knowledge of family.

2. *Showing the theme of the vocabulary.*

By showing the theme of the vocabulary, it lets the students think about what might happen and what words can appear in the vocabulary learning.

3. *Introducing the predicting puppet.*

The teacher holds and introduces the predicting puppet. The teacher also tells that the puppet needs the students' assistance in predicting what words will appear in the vocabulary learning.

4. *Showing the first few words of the vocabulary.*

The teacher reads aloud the first few words of the vocabulary together with the students. The teacher reads the vocabulary alone first word by word. After that, students read the word.

5. *Introducing the questioning puppet.*

The teacher holds the puppet and tells the students that the puppet wants a help from the students to ask question about the vocabulary together with the puppet. The puppet is questioning about the first few words of the vocabulary.

6. *Showing the next few words of the vocabulary.*

The teacher and the students read aloud the next few words of the vocabulary together. The teacher reads the vocabulary alone first word by word. The students follow to read the word then.

7. *Showing the questioning puppet again.*

The teacher holds the puppet again to ask question about the next few words of the vocabulary. The teacher tells the students that the puppet wants the students help by asking the questions together.

8. *Introducing the clarifying puppet.*

The teacher holds the puppet and tells the students that the puppet wants a help from the students to find if there is still any misunderstanding about the vocabulary.

9. *Introducing the summarizing puppet.*

The teacher holds the puppet and tells the students that the summarizing puppet needs assistance from the students to summarize and retell the vocabulary learning with their own words in short. The teacher permits the students to retell only one word or the whole vocabulary. The students also recall the important things about the vocabulary such as the theme and the meaning with the summarizing puppet.

**3. Advantages of Using Reciprocal Teaching Technique in Teaching Vocabulary to Elementary School Students**

Many advantages can be achieved by elementary school students when they learn vocabulary using Reciprocal Teaching Technique. The four strategies in Reciprocal Teaching Technique let the students predict, question, clarify, and summarize every word in the vocabulary so that they can have a better understanding toward the vocabulary. Besides, the puppets used in Reciprocal Teaching Technique motivate elementary school students to learn the vocabulary. The puppets also support the students to express their thought more easy and to actively join during the vocabulary learning. Using Reciprocal Teaching Technique then increases the number of vocabulary comprehended by elementary school students. Henceforward, with this technique, the students also gain a good skill to be used in learning vocabulary.

**C. CONCLUSION**

**1. Conclusion**

Reciprocal Teaching Technique is designed to focus on just four important strategies that the elementary school students can use to comprehend the vocabulary. The strategies let the students predict the vocabulary when they see the theme, question important details of the vocabulary, clarify whether they have comprehended the vocabulary, and summarize the vocabulary learning in their own words. Elementary school students will learn the new vocabulary through these strategies step by step with the support of puppets. Each puppet represents each strategy.

**Note:** This article is written based on the Resti Ningsih's paper under the supervision of Fitrawati, S.S, M.Pd.

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